

Friis, John

From: Kate Nicoll [kate@soul-friends.org]
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2009 5:28 PM
To: Friis, John; Rep. Urban, Diana; Rep. Esty, Elizabeth; Rep. Nardello, Vickie
Cc: eca_pace@yahoo.com
Subject: HB6666, Section 5

For the last year, my son – Alex has had the good fortune to attend the Educational Center for the Arts in New Haven. Throughout his school career, he has been involved in the academically gifted program in Cheshire; but nothing comes close to the wonderful growth in his creative writing over this last year of attendance at ECA. In fact, we just received news that, in fact, he won the first prize for the Thornton Wilder Writing Award for his poetry in his sophomore year.

In my review of the history of ECA, no school has been able to produce such high level of artistry in high school students. When you see the list of where alumni of ECA have gone to college the list is quite impressive – Middlebury, Harvard, Yale – and these students have enriched our lives through their writings, music and artistry. The difference at ECA, in comparison to other magnet schools, is that many of these students are taught by college professors who are experts in their craft. As someone who has also taught at an undergraduate and graduate level, it is truly special that these very talented students are exposed to that level of knowledge and given the creative freedom to express and grow in their artistic abilities. There should, in deed, be consideration for those who have taught at the college level in the certification process – and to consider their ability to teach a specialized group of artistic students whose gifts cannot be nurtured in their regular school districts. The beauty of the ECA program is that the students can maintain their social ties and commitment to their own town community; while also creating a unique subset of friends that empowers their unique talents in the arts.

I urge you to consider the unique blessings to the artistic youth of Connecticut at the ECA school. Attend a spring reading, a play or a concert to see the level of creativity that would be undone with the discussed changes in inter-district magnet schools and teacher certification. As a part-time magnet school, many of these students are honor students in their hometown excelling in other academic areas as well, as my son does in history. ECA provides our teens with the best of both worlds – a love to their own community and a passion for expression of their creativity in a small, nurturing environment.

Sincerely,

Kate Nicoll
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